

FACT SHEET

Biological Control Amendment Bill 2016

The Tasmanian *Biological Control Act 1986* was enacted as part of a national framework of mirror legislation that supports the use of biocontrol agents to manage the impact of specific invasive species. Each State and Territory, and the Commonwealth, has similar legislation with provisions relating to the approval of biocontrol agent organisms and biocontrol target organisms.

The Act provides for the declaration of 'target organisms' (for example, the weed gorse) and 'agent organisms' (for example, the gorse spider mite), and contains provisions to ensure that biological control activities are subject to liability protection and can proceed without interruption by litigation.

The Australian Government sought to amend its legislation with the intent of clarifying the definition of an organism to remove ambiguity around the original intent of the Act by including viruses and sub-viruses in that definition. All other jurisdictions agreed to also amend their legislation so as to ensure the legislation remained consistent.

The proposed amendments do not alter the scope of the Act and are consistent with the original intent of the legislation. The Bill will not affect the process for approving future biological agents or targets or reduce the rigour applied to the scientific, technical or safety procedures and standards applying to biological control.

Importantly, the amendments will provide greater certainty for institutions undertaking research into new biological control targets and agents, and for land managers and farmers participating in biological control programs.